

Workshop 2

Strategic productivity - turning a narrative into



Professor Bart van Ark

Professor of Productivity Studies, Alliance Manchester
Business School and Managing Director at The Productivity
Institute



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STRATEGIC PRODUCTIVITY – TURNING A NARRATIVE INTO ACTION

Bart van Ark

The Productivity Institute & University of Manchester

Help to Grow, Alumni Network Annual Conference
February 12th, 2026



*Lay the foundations for an era of **sustained and inclusive productivity growth** and help **policy makers and business leaders** across the UK understand how to **improve productivity and raise living standards***



Human capital



Organisational capital



Knowledge capital



Geography and place



Macroeconomic trends and policy



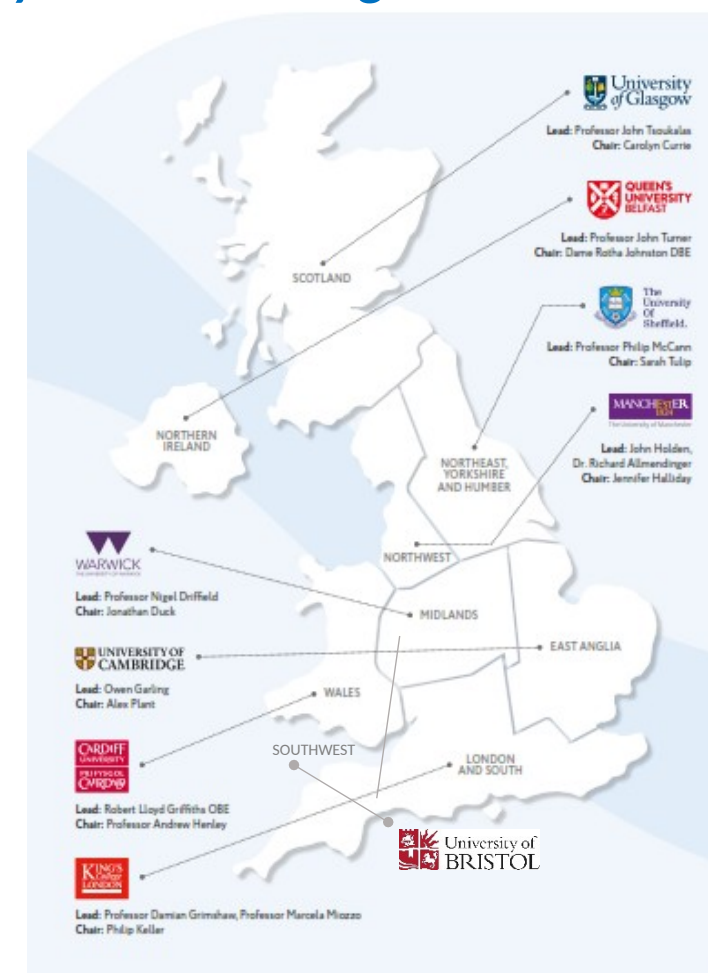
Institutions and governance



Measurement and methods



Social, environmental and technological transitions



WHAT IS PRODUCTIVITY ABOUT?



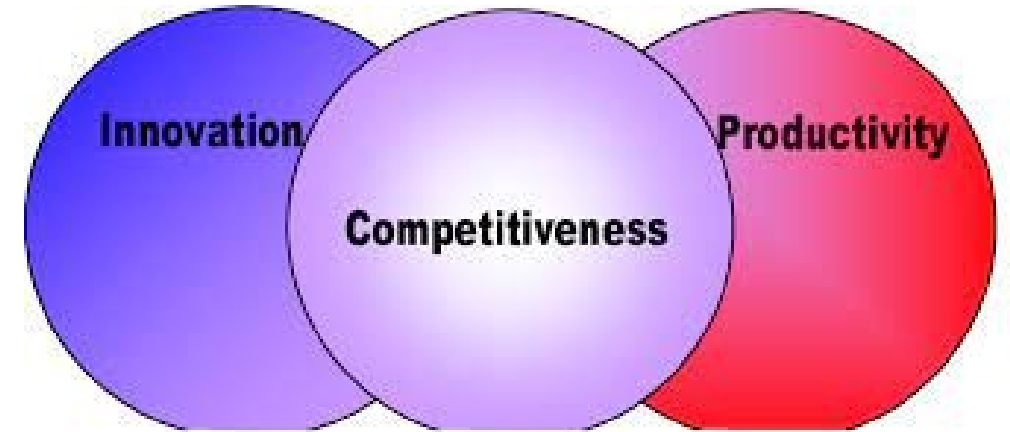
<https://www.menti.com/>
code 8850 3885

Perceptions of productivity (positive and negative)

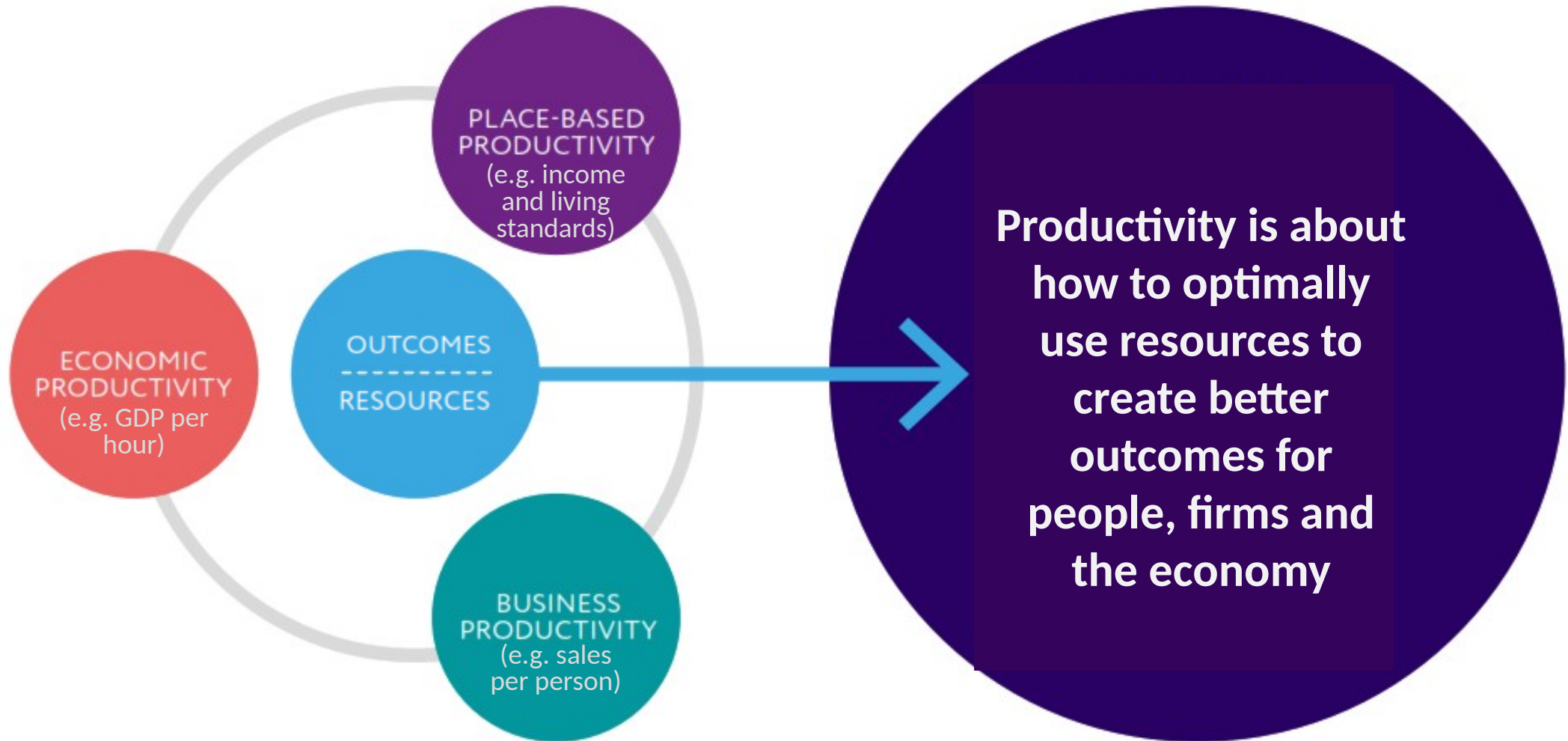
leader bold focus
creative
fast inspiration transpiration

WHY PRODUCTIVITY MATTERS

- Drives long-term growth
- Creates resources to invest
- Makes firms grow faster
- Create jobs that fetch higher wages
- Make people more innovative
- Make people healthier and more engaged
- Creates better outcomes for others: people, firms and places



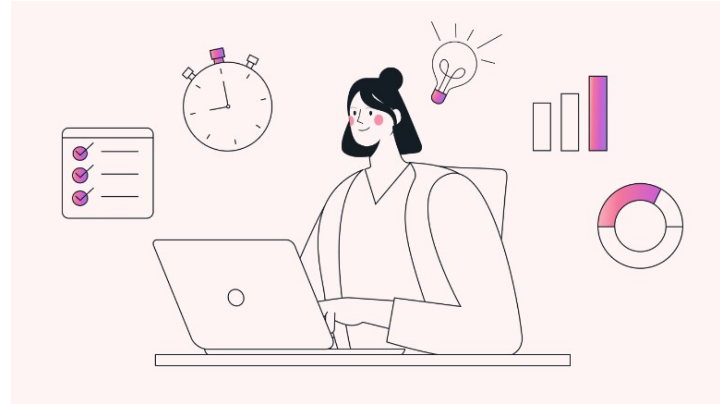
PRODUCTIVITY CREATES BETTER OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE, FIRMS AND THE ECONOMY



PRODUCTIVITY, EFFICIENCY OR BOTH?

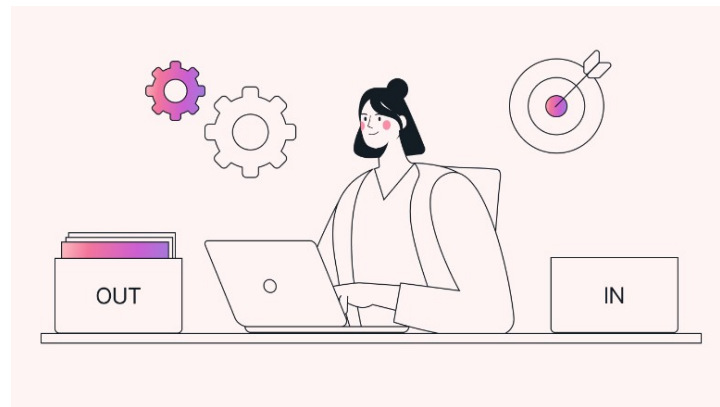
Efficiency

- Task & efficiency oriented
- Monetary (sales/cost) or piece rate (quantity/unit)
- Focus on “doing more with less” (e.g. less time or fewer resources)

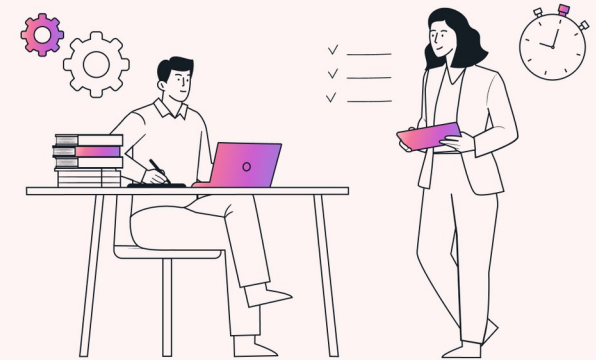


Productivity

- Business & effectiveness oriented
- “Real” measure, adjusted for inflation (firm output/input)
- Focus on how “creating better outcomes” by better combining limited resources



Efficiency and Productivity: You Need Both to Drive Success



THE KEY DRIVERS OF PRODUCTIVITY



<https://youtu.be/U6ZIE6xFBms>

FIVE AREAS OF PRIORITY FOR STRATEGIC PRODUCTIVITY

- Finance for Investment
- Strategic Cost Management
- Valuing Intangible Assets

- Customer relationships
- Data Analytics
- Collaboration and Communication



- R&D and New Technologies
- Digital Transformation
- Knowledge Diffusion

- Worker Skills and Training
- Engagement and Well-Being
- Agility and Adaptability

- Inclusive Leadership
- Managing Outcomes
- Flexible Teams

Source: The Productivity Institute

TERA ALLAS



- Senior Advisor, McKinsey & Company
- Honorary Professor at Alliance Manchester Business School
- Chair of The Productivity Institute's Advisory Committee
- Trustee of Be the Business
- Co-Chair of the NHS Productivity Commission, The Health Foundation
- Governor of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research

Formerly:

- Chief Economist roles at the UK's energy, transport, and business departments
- Director General for Strategy, Analysis, and Better Regulation
- Deputy Head of the UK Government Economic Service.

CONVERSATION ON BUSINESS PRODUCTIVITY DRIVERS BETWEEN TERA ALLES AND BART VAN ARK



TABLE ASSIGNMENT: *DISCUSS KEY ACTIONS* FOR ONE OF THE FIVE KEY DRIVERS ... AND SEND UP TO 10 INSIGHTS TO ...



- Innovation and Digital: **menti.com 4105 5495**
- Worker Skills and Well-Being: **menti.com 6914 5254**
- Leadership and Management: **menti.com 8933 3338**
- Marketing and Communication: **menti.com 6824 3633**
- Mobilising and Finance: **menti.com 4850 3741**

SUMMARY KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. YOU NEED A PRODUCTIVITY NARRATIVE

- *What? Why? How?*

2. THERE IS NO SILVER BULLET TO PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT

- *The art of productivity is to find the optimal mix of productivity drivers*

3. THERE IS NO SINGLE SHOOTER TO FIRE THE PRODUCTIVITY BULLETS

- Productivity is a highly collaborative effort

4. DO NOT CHANGE EVERYTHING AT ONCE

- Productivity is a process of continuous improvement in a disciplined way

Strategic Productivity at the Alliance Manchester Business School - 4 Day Course



What is this course?

- 4-day course at Alliance Manchester Business School, **4 - 7 Nov 2025**
- Uses a Strategic Productivity Framework developed by The Productivity Institute
- Covers five core productivity pillars: innovation, skills and wellbeing, leadership, finance, marketing and communication

experts on productivity

resources and materials for 12 months post-course.

Learning, application and outcomes

- Mix of theory, live project work, company visits and peer exchange
- Gains: strategic mindset, actionable productivity levers, stronger competitive performance, network of peers

Who should attend and why?

- Senior leaders, executives, decision-makers
- Ideal for CEOs, MDs, operations heads, finance leads and transformation leads who want strategy, performance, embed pr



UPCOMING COURSE DATES: 2-5 June 2026, 2-5 February 2026, 6-9 July 2027



<https://www.productivity.ac.uk/>